



United States Consulate General Guadalajara

**PLEASE CIRCULATE THIS IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO
AS MANY AMERICAN CITIZENS AS POSSIBLE**

SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING

Date: April 22, 2011

BEGIN TEXT.

Travel Warning

Mexico

April 22, 2011

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens traveling to and living in Mexico about the security situation in Mexico. This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning for Mexico dated September 10, 2010 to consolidate and update information about the security situation and to advise the public of additional restrictions on the travel of U.S. government personnel.

Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day for study, tourism or business and at least one million U.S. citizens who live in Mexico. The Mexican government makes a considerable effort to protect U.S. citizens and other visitors to major tourist destinations. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes. Nevertheless, crime and violence are serious problems and can occur anywhere. While most victims of violence are Mexican citizens associated with criminal activity, the security situation poses serious risks for U.S. citizens as well.

It is imperative that you understand the risks involved in travel to Mexico and how best to avoid dangerous situations. Common-sense precautions such as visiting only legitimate business and tourist areas during daylight hours, and avoiding areas where criminal activity might occur, can help ensure that travel to Mexico is safe and enjoyable.

General Conditions

Since 2006, the Mexican government has engaged in an extensive effort to combat transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). The TCOs, meanwhile, have been engaged in a vicious struggle to control drug trafficking routes and other criminal activity. According to Government of Mexico figures, 34,612 people have been killed in narcotics-related violence in Mexico since December 2006. More than 15,000 narcotics-related homicides occurred in 2010, an increase of almost two-thirds compared to 2009. Most of those killed in narcotics-related violence since 2006 have been members of TCOs. However, innocent persons have also been killed as have Mexican law enforcement and military personnel.

There is no evidence that U.S. tourists have been targeted by criminal elements due to their citizenship. Nonetheless, while in Mexico you should be aware of your surroundings at all times and exercise particular caution in unfamiliar areas. Bystanders, including U.S. citizens, have been injured or killed in violent incidents in various parts of the

country, especially, but not exclusively in the northern border region, demonstrating the heightened risk of violence throughout Mexico. TCOs, meanwhile, engage in a wide-range of criminal activities that can directly impact U.S. citizens, including kidnapping, armed car-jacking, and extortion that can directly impact U.S. citizens. The number of U.S. citizens reported to the Department of State as murdered in Mexico increased from 35 in 2007 to 111 in 2010.

The Mexican government has deployed federal police and military personnel throughout the country as part of its efforts to combat the TCOs. U.S. citizens traveling on Mexican roads and highways may encounter government checkpoints, which are often staffed by military personnel. You are advised to cooperate with personnel at government checkpoints and mobile military patrols. TCOs have erected their own unauthorized checkpoints, and killed or abducted motorists who have failed to stop at them.

Violence along Mexican roads and highways is a particular concern in the northern border region. As a result, effective July 15, 2010, the U.S. Mission in Mexico imposed restrictions on U.S. government employees' travel. U.S. government employees and their families are not permitted to drive from the U.S.-Mexico border to or from the interior of Mexico or Central America. Travel by vehicle is permitted between Hermosillo and Nogales.

While violent incidents have occurred at all hours of the day and night on both modern toll ("cuotas") highways and on secondary roads, they have occurred most frequently at night and on isolated roads. To reduce risk, you are strongly urged to travel only during daylight hours throughout Mexico, to avoid isolated roads, and to use toll roads whenever possible. For more information on road safety and crime along Mexico's roadways, see the Department of State's Country Specific Information.

Due to ongoing violence and persistent security concerns, you are urged to defer non-essential travel to the states of Tamaulipas and Michoacán, and to parts of the states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Sinaloa, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi and Jalisco. Details on these locations, and other areas in which travelers should exercise caution, are below.

Violence along the U.S. - Mexico Border

You should be especially aware of safety and security concerns when visiting the northern border states of Northern Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas. Much of the country's narcotics-related violence has occurred in the border region. More than a third of all U.S. citizens killed in Mexico in 2010 whose deaths were reported to the U.S. government were killed in the border cities of Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana. Narcotics-related homicide rates in the border states of Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas have increased dramatically in the past two years.

Carjacking and highway robbery are serious problems in many parts of the border region and U.S. citizens have been murdered in such incidents. Most victims who complied with carjackers at these checkpoints have reported that they were not physically harmed. Incidents have occurred during the day and at night, and carjackers have used a variety of techniques, including bumping moving vehicles to force them to stop and running vehicles off the road at high speed. There are some indications that criminals have particularly targeted newer and larger vehicles with U.S. license plates, especially dark-colored SUVs. However, victims' vehicles have included those with both Mexican and American registration and vary in type from late model SUVs and pick-up trucks to old sedans.

If you make frequent visits to border cities, you should vary your route and park in well-lit, guarded and paid parking lots. Exercise caution when entering or exiting vehicles.

Large firefights between rival TCOs or TCOs and Mexican authorities have taken place in towns and cities in many parts of Mexico, especially in the border region. Firefights have occurred in broad daylight on streets and in other public venues, such as restaurants and clubs. During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area. The location and timing of future armed engagements cannot be predicted.

You are urged to defer travel to those areas mentioned in this Travel Warning and to exercise extreme caution when traveling throughout the northern border region.

Northern Baja California: Targeted TCO assassinations continue to take place in Northern Baja California, including the city of Tijuana. You should exercise caution in this area, particularly at night. In late 2010, turf battles between criminal groups proliferated and resulted in numerous assassinations in areas of Tijuana frequented by U.S. citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours throughout the city. In one such incident, an American citizen was shot and seriously wounded.

Nogales and Northern Sonora: You are advised to exercise caution in the city of Nogales. Northern Sonora is a key region in the international drug and human trafficking trades, and can be extremely dangerous for travelers. The U.S. Consulate requires that armored vehicles are used for official travel in the consular district of Nogales, including certain areas within the city of Nogales. The region west of Nogales, east of Sonoyta, and from Caborca north, including the towns of Saric, Tubutama and Altar, and the eastern edge of Sonora bordering Chihuahua, are known centers of illegal activity. You should defer non-essential travel to these areas.

You are advised to exercise caution when visiting the coastal town of Puerto Peñasco. In the past year there have been multiple incidents of TCO-related violence, including the shooting of the city's police chief. U.S. citizens visiting Puerto Peñasco are urged to cross the border at Lukeville, AZ, to limit driving through Mexico and to limit travel to main roads during daylight hours.

Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua: The situation in the state of Chihuahua, specifically Ciudad Juarez, is of special concern. Ciudad Juarez has the highest murder rate in Mexico. Mexican authorities report that more than 3,100 people were killed in Ciudad Juarez in 2010. Three persons associated with the Consulate General were murdered in March, 2010. You should defer non-essential travel to Ciudad Juarez and to the Guadalupe Bravo area southeast of Ciudad Juarez. U.S. citizens should also defer non-essential travel to the northwest quarter of the state of Chihuahua. From the United States, these areas are often reached through the Columbus, NM, and Fabens and Fort Hancock, TX, ports-of-entry. In both areas, U.S. citizens have been victims of narcotics-related violence. There have been incidents of narcotics-related violence in the vicinity of the Copper Canyon in Chihuahua.

Durango, Coahuila and Zacatecas: Between 2006 and 2010, the number of narcotics-related murders in the State of Durango increased dramatically. Several areas in the state have seen sharp increases in violence and remain volatile and unpredictable. U.S. government employees are restricted from traveling to the cities of Durango and Gomez Palacio. You should defer non-essential travel to these cities.

The State of Coahuila has also experienced an increase in violent crimes and narcotics-related murders. U.S. government employees are restricted from traveling to the area known as "La Laguna", including the city of Torreon, and the city of Saltillo within the state. You should defer non-essential travel to this area, as well as to the cities of Piedras Negras and Ciudad Acuña due to frequent incidents of TCO-related violence.

The northwestern portion of the state of Zacatecas has become notably dangerous and insecure. Robberies and carjackings are occurring with increased frequency and both local authorities and residents have reported a surge in observed TCO activity. This area is remote, and local authorities are unable to regularly patrol it or quickly respond to incidents that occur there. The Consulate General in Monterrey restricts travel for U.S. government employees to the city of Fresnillo and the area extending northwest from Fresnillo along Highway 45 (Fresnillo-Sombrete) between Highways 44 and 49. In addition, highway 49 northwards from Fresnillo through Durango and in to Chihuahua is isolated and should be considered dangerous. You should defer non-essential travel to these areas.

Monterrey and Nuevo Leon: The level of violence and insecurity in Monterrey remains elevated. Local police and private patrols do not have the capacity to deter criminal elements or respond effectively to security incidents. As a result of a Department of State assessment of the overall security situation, on September 10, 2010, the Consulate

General in Monterrey became a partially unaccompanied post with no minor dependents of U.S. government employees permitted.

TCOs continue to use stolen cars and trucks to create roadblocks or "blockades" on major thoroughfares, preventing the military or police from responding to criminal activity in Monterrey and the surrounding areas. Travelers on the highways between Monterrey and the United States (notably through Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros/Reynosa) have been targeted for robbery that has resulted in violence. They have also been caught in incidents of gunfire between criminals and Mexican law enforcement. In 2010, TCOs kidnapped guests out of reputable hotels in the downtown Monterrey area, blocking off adjoining streets to prevent law enforcement response. TCOs have also regularly attacked local government facilities, prisons and police stations, and engaged in public shootouts with the military and between themselves. Pedestrians and innocent bystanders have been killed in these incidents.

The number of kidnappings and disappearances in Monterrey, and increasingly throughout Monterrey's consular district, is of particular concern. Both the local and expatriate communities have been victimized and local law enforcement has provided little to no response. In addition, police have been implicated in some of these incidents. Travelers and residents are strongly advised to lower their profile and avoid displaying any evidence of wealth that might draw attention.

Tamaulipas: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Tamaulipas. In an effort to prevent the military or police from responding to criminal activity, TCOs have set up roadblocks or "blockades" in various parts of Nuevo Laredo in which armed gunmen carjack and rob unsuspecting drivers. These blockades occur without warning and at all times, day and night. The Consulate General prohibits employees from entering the entertainment zone in Nuevo Laredo known as "Boys Town" because of concerns about violent crime in that area. U.S. government employees are currently restricted from travelling on the highway between Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey, as well as on Mexican Highway 2 towards Reynosa or Ciudad Acuña due to security concerns.

Be aware of the risks posed by armed robbery and carjacking on state highways throughout Tamaulipas. In January 2011, a U.S. citizen was murdered in what appears to have been a failed carjacking attempt. While no highway routes through Tamaulipas are considered safe, many of the crimes reported to the U.S. Consulate General in Matamoros took place along the Matamoros-Tampico highway, particularly around San Fernando and the area north of Tampico.

Crime and Violence in Other Parts of Mexico

While security concerns are particularly acute in the northern border region, you should be aware of situations that could affect your safety in other parts of Mexico.

Sinaloa and Southern Sonora: One of Mexico's most powerful TCOs is based in the state of Sinaloa. Since 2006, more homicides have occurred in the state's capital city of Culiacan than in any other city in Mexico, with the exception of Ciudad Juarez. You should defer non-essential travel to Culiacan and exercise extreme caution when visiting the rest of the state. Travel off the toll roads in remote areas of Sinaloa is especially dangerous and should be avoided.

In the last year, the city of Mazatlan has experienced a level of violence, primarily confrontations between TCOs, not seen before. In 2010 there were over 300 narcotics-related murders within the city, compared to fewer than 100 in 2009. You are encouraged to visit Mazatlan during daylight hours and limit the time you spend outside tourist centers. Exercise caution during late night and early morning hours when most violent crimes occur.

Highway robbery and carjacking are ongoing security concerns for travelers on the Mexican toll road Highway 15 in Sonora and on Maxipista Benito Juarez in Sinaloa. These highways are known to be particularly dangerous at night when roadside robberies occur. When traveling in Sinaloa, U.S. government employees are required to use armored vehicles and may only travel in daylight hours.

San Luis Potosi: In February 2011, one U.S. government employee was killed and another wounded when they were attacked in their U.S. government vehicle on Highway 57 near Santa Maria del Rio. The incident remains under investigation. Cartel violence and highway lawlessness have increased throughout the state and are a continuing security concern. All official U.S. government employees and their families have been advised to defer travel on the entire stretch of highway 57D in San Luis Potosi as well as travel in the state east of highway 57D towards Tamaulipas. You should defer non-essential travel in these areas.

Nayarit and Jalisco: Official U.S. government employees are prohibited from traveling to Colotlan, Jalisco, and Yahualica, Jalisco, both near the Zacatecas border, because of an increasingly volatile security situation. Concerns include roadblocks placed by individuals posing as police or military personnel and recent gun battles between rival TCOs involving automatic weapons. You should defer non-essential travel to these cities. In addition, the border areas between Jalisco state and the states of Zacatecas and Michoacán, as well as southern Nayarit state including the city of Tepic, have been sites of violence and crime involving TCOs. You should exercise extreme caution when traveling in these areas. Due to recent TCO-mounted road blockades between the Guadalajara airport and the Guadalajara metropolitan areas, U.S. government employees are only authorized to travel between Guadalajara and the Guadalajara Airport during daylight hours.

Michoacán: You should defer non-essential travel to the State of Michoacán, which is home to another of Mexico's most dangerous TCOs, "La Familia". Attacks on government officials and law enforcement and military personnel, and other incidents of TCO-related violence, have occurred throughout Michoacan, including in and around the capital of Morelia and in the vicinity of the world famous butterfly sanctuaries in the eastern part of the State.

Guerrero and Morelos: You should exercise extreme caution when traveling in the northwestern part of the state of Guerrero, which has a strong TCO presence. Do not take the dangerous, isolated road through Ciudad Altamirano to the beach resorts of Ixtapa and Zihuatanejo and exercise caution traveling on the coastal road between Acapulco and Ixtapa due to the risk of roadblocks and carjackings. Numerous incidents of narcotics-related violence have occurred in the city of Cuernavaca, in the State of Morelos, a popular destination for American language students.

Downtown Acapulco and surrounding areas have seen a significant increase in narcotics-related violence in the last year. Incidents have included daylight gunfights and murders of law enforcement personnel and some have resulted in the deaths of innocent bystanders. Due to the unpredictable nature of this violence, you should exercise extreme caution when visiting downtown Acapulco. To reduce risks, tourists should not visit the downtown area at night and should remain in clearly identifiable tourist areas. In general, the popular tourist area of Diamante just south of the city has not been affected by the increasing violence.

Further Information

You are encouraged to review the [U.S. Embassy's Mexico Security Update](#). The update contains information about recent security incidents in Mexico that could affect the safety of the traveling public.

For more detailed information on staying safe in Mexico, please see the State Department's [Country Specific Information for Mexico](#). Information on security and travel to popular tourist destinations is also provided in the publication: [Spring Break in Mexico - Know Before You Go!](#)

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the [State Department's internet web site](#), where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), and [Travel Alerts](#) can be found. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to enroll with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at travel.state.gov. For any

emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the [U.S. Embassy](#) or the closest U.S. Consulate. The numbers provided below for the Embassy and Consulates are available around the clock. The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000. You may also contact the Embassy by [e-mail](#) at ACSMexicoCity@state.gov.

Consulates (with consular districts):

- **Ciudad Juarez** (Chihuahua): Paseo de la Victoria 3650, tel. (011)(52)(656) 227-3000.
- **Guadalajara** (Nayarit, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, and Colima): Progreso 175, telephone (011)(52)(333) 268-2100.
- **Hermosillo** (Sinaloa and the southern part of the state of Sonora): Avenida Monterrey 141, telephone (011)(52)(662) 289-3500.
- **Matamoros** (the southern part of Tamaulipas with the exception of the city of Tampico): Avenida Primera 2002, telephone (011)(52)(868) 812-4402.
- **Merida** (Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo): Calle 60 no. 338-K x 29 y 31, Col. Alcala Martin, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico 97050, telephone (011)(52)(999) 942-5700 or 202-250-3711 (U.S. number).
- **Monterrey** (Nuevo Leon, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, and the southern part of Coahuila): Avenida Constitucion 411 Poniente, telephone (011)(52)(818) 047-3100.
- **Nogales** (the northern part of Sonora): Calle San Jose, Nogales, Sonora, telephone (011)(52)(631) 311-8150.
- **Nuevo Laredo** (the northern part of Coahuila and the northwestern part of Tamaulipas): Calle Allende 3330, col. Jardin, telephone (011)(52)(867) 714-0512.
- **Tijuana** (Baja California Norte and Baja California Sur): Tapachula 96, telephone (011)(52)(664) 622-7400.

All other Mexican states, and the Federal District of Mexico City, are part of the Embassy's consular district.

Consular Agencies:

- **Acapulco:** Hotel Emporio, Costera Miguel Aleman 121 – Suite 14, telephone (011)(52)(744) 481-0100 or (011)(52)(744) 484-0300.
- **Cabo San Lucas:** Blvd. Marina local c-4, Plaza Nautica, col. Centro, telephone (011)(52)(624) 143-3566.
- **Cancún:** Blvd. Kukulcan Km 13 ZH Torre La Europea, Despacho 301 Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico C.P. 77500; telephone (011)(52)(998) 883-0272. Ciudad Acuña: Closed until further notice.
- **Cozumel:** Plaza Villa Mar en el Centro, Plaza Principal, (Parque Juárez between Melgar and 5th ave.) 2nd floor, locales #8 and 9, telephone (011)(52)(987) 872-4574 or, 202-459-4661 (a U.S. number).
- **Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo:** Hotel Fontan, Blvd. Ixtapa, telephone (011)(52)(755) 553-2100.
- **Mazatlán:** Playa Gaviotas #202, Zona Dorada, telephone (011)(52)(669) 916-5889.
- **Oaxaca:** Macedonio Alcalá no. 407, interior 20, telephone (011)(52)(951) 514-3054, (011) (52)(951) 516-2853.
- **Piedras Negras:** Abasolo #211, Zona Centro, Piedras Negras, Coah., Tel. (011)(52)(878) 782-5586.
- **Playa del Carmen:** "The Palapa," Calle 1 Sur, between Avenida 15 and Avenida 20, telephone (011)(52)(984) 873-0303 or 202-370-6708(a U.S. number).
- **Puerto Vallarta:** Paradise Plaza, Paseo de los Cocoteros #1, Local #4, Interior #17, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, telephone (011)(52)(322) 222-0069.
- **Reynosa:** Calle Monterrey #390, Esq. Sinaloa, Colonia Rodríguez, telephone: (011)(52)(899) 923 - 9331.
- **San Luis Potosí:** Edificio "Las Terrazas", Avenida Venustiano Carranza 2076-41, Col. Polanco, telephone: (011)(52)(444) 811-7802/7803.
- **San Miguel de Allende:** Dr. Hernandez Macias #72, telephone (011)(52)(415) 152-2357 or (011)(52)(415) 152-0068.

END OF TEXT.

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<http://guadalajara.usconsulate.gov/>

**The Consulate office hours are Monday through Friday
from 08:00 a.m. to 04:30 p.m. (except for Mexican and U.S. holidays).**